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High-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development

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Report of the Secretary-General**

1. In its resolution 54/196 of 22 December 1999, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of that resolution and on the overall work undertaken with regard to the high-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development (para. 18). Assembly resolution 54/196, inter alia, established the Preparatory Committee for the High-level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development and set in motion various activities that are to lead to the high-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development in 2001. The present report, which complements the report of the Preparatory Committee itself, focuses on secretariat activities, specifically the status of secretariat cooperation with stakeholders, the preparation of the regional consultations, the preparations for the hearings, and arrangements for the secretariat support for the preparatory process, including the establishment of an extrabudgetary trust fund. Additional programme details and all related documentation are available on the financing for development (FFD) web site (www.un.org/esa/analysis/ffd).

Status of secretariat cooperation with relevant stakeholders

2. The secretariat has taken a number of initiatives to implement the mandates emanating from the General Assembly to encourage the participation of relevant stakeholders in both the preparatory process and the high-level intergovernmental event (Assembly resolution 54/196, para. 6).

3. Soon after General Assembly resolution 54/196 was adopted, the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, initiated with the secretariats of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization preliminary consultations on potential modalities for their participation in the substantive process and the high-level intergovernmental event. The Secretary-General reported on his preliminary consultations to the Preparatory Committee at its organizational session in February 2000 (A/AC.257/1). Subsequently, the secretariat has sought to engage the secretariat of these three intergovernmental organizations in activities on a number of planes. All three organizations are actively

* A/55/150 and Corr.1 and 2.
** Matters related to the postponement of the dates of the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee delayed timely submission of the report.

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participating in inter-secretariat working groups that are developing proposals for possible inclusion in the policy report of the Secretary-General to the Preparatory Committee (see para. 18 below).

4. In addition, the World Bank and IMF have designated senior officials who collaborate on a regular basis with the FFD coordinating secretariat on all matters relating to financing for development. The FFD Preparatory Committee has been kept abreast of these developments (A/AC.257/9). The FFD coordinating secretariat has also sought to facilitate the involvement of other official intergovernmental stakeholders. The Secretariat has assisted the FFD Bureau in organizing briefings for delegations by representatives of some of these entities. Regional development banks are being closely involved in regional consultations. Similarly, notes with updates of FFD activities have been sent to other official stakeholders from all regions to encourage their active engagement in the preparatory process.

5. The secretariat has worked in several ways to engage civil society and private sector organizations in the FFD preparatory process. An open invitation by letter and e-mail has been extended in August/September 2000 to a wide range of organizations to submit requests for accreditation (where necessary), to consider participating in the public hearings and the Preparatory Committee meetings in an appropriate manner, and to provide inputs to the FFD secretariat and to the preparatory process in the development of substantive proposals. (See para. 12 for further information on the public hearings.) Furthermore, the secretariat has been invited to participate in various private sector and civil society events in order to brief the participants on the status of preparation of the financing for development process and to elicit their contributions so as to ensure having a successful final event.

6. The FFD secretariat has expanded its e-mail/web site outreach software to encourage greater participation by all relevant stakeholders. Approximately every fortnight, the FFD web site is updated and a summary of the changes are e-mailed to a wide list of contacts. Governments and other stakeholders have been invited to provide e-mail addresses for inclusion in the FFD contact database.

Status of preparation of regional consultations

7. The Preparatory Committee approved the recommendation of its Bureau in its first report (A/AC.257/6), paragraph 11, that the regional commissions, in conjunction with the regional development banks and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), organize consultations during the second half of 2000 on substantive matters before the Preparatory Committee (see also General Assembly resolution 54/279, in which the Assembly approved paragraph 11 of the report). The Bureau of the Preparatory Committee, in addition to the secretariat, has kept in contact with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions to this end. The Executive Secretaries expressed on behalf of the regional commissions their intention of holding regional consultations on financing for development in the most effective ways and to extend an invitation to the corresponding regional development banks to play a helpful role in the organization of the regional consultations.

8. The Executive Secretaries of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) also met in April and July 2000 with the relevant United Nations entities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, UNCTAD and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to discuss the preparations of the regional meetings. The FFD coordinating secretariat has also had separate meetings with the various regional commissions, UNCTAD and other bodies to ensure an effective organization of the regional consultations.

9. The regional meetings are being organized according to the agenda of the international event, although it is understood that the wish of the Preparatory Committee is that each regional meeting may evolve its own agenda according to the region's specific particular interests and concerns. It has been stressed that the regional meetings should be seen as an integral part of the overall global process and their

results should thus be treated as primary inputs into that process.

10. Regarding participation of other institutional and non-institutional stakeholders in the regional meetings, it was noted by the Executive Secretaries that the meetings had to be focused in order to capture the attention of finance ministers and central bankers. It was thus agreed that the focus should be on regional financial institutions including, besides the regional development banks, subregional financial entities as well as regional industry and business associations.

11. ESCAP, the Government of Indonesia and UNCTAD co-hosted an Asian regional consultation from 2 to 5 August 2000 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Arrangements are under way for an ECLAC meeting on 9 and 10 November 2000 in Colombia, co-hosted by ECLAC and the Government of Colombia; an ECA meeting from 20 to 22 November 2000 in Addis Ababa as part of the ECA meetings of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance and of Trade; an ESCWA meeting on 20 and 21 November 2000 in Beirut; and ECE meetings on 6 and 7 December 2000 in Geneva. The latest agendas and background papers are available at the FFD web site (www.un.org/esa/analysis/ffd/regional.htm).

Status of preparation of the hearings with civil society and business community

12. The Preparatory Committee also accepted the Bureau's recommendation to hold a two-day set of "hearings" with representatives of civil society and a separate set of hearings with the business community. The civil society hearings are scheduled for 6 and 7 November 2000, while the private sector hearings are being arranged for 11 and 12 December 2000. The specific subjects for these hearings will be based on the financing for development preliminary agenda. A draft list of potential participants in both sets of hearings should be available by October 2000 for consideration and approval by the Preparatory Committee at its resumed substantive session.

13. The civil society hearings are expected to welcome the participation of accredited non-governmental organization representatives, from, inter alia, the following broad categories: the academic and research community, foundations, religious organizations, trade unions, the media, and other non-governmental organizations.

14. The private sector hearings are expected to welcome participation from business representatives from among the following broad categories: private banks, institutional investors, other market institutions, non-financial corporations and business associations. Efforts will be made to select leading institutions as recipients of invitations to the hearings, but other important criteria will also be taken into account, such as, for example, an adequate representation of business entities from developing countries.

15. It is expected that a co-chairman's general summary of the hearings will be prepared to serve as an informal record of the key views expressed and proposals made in the hearings, reflecting the highlights of the discussion. This summary may hopefully provide a useful reference for delegations in their official deliberations.

16. General participation in the financing for development process has been opened, according to the decision of the Preparatory Committee, to non-governmental organizations currently in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. Other non-governmental organizations are welcome to apply for ad hoc consultative status (see A/AC.257/6, paras. 14-19, and General Assembly resolution 54/279, para. 2 (e)). Non-governmental organizations that participate in the hearings will be drawn from one of these two categories.

Secretariat arrangements

17. As reported to the Preparatory Committee, a coordinating secretariat within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was established in March 2000 headed by an Executive Coordinator. Core staff has been assigned to the secretariat drawing on the existing subprogrammes under the programme "Economic and social affairs". Staff has also been seconded to the secretariat from UNCTAD, UNDP and the World Bank. In the case of staff from within the United Nations, the secondments are being carried out under the existing rules and procedures for staff. In the case of secondments from other bodies, staff costs are being covered by the parent organization.

18. The FFD coordinating secretariat has set up several inter-secretariat issue-oriented working groups

to bring together the best technical resources in the United Nations system for the preparation of substantive recommendations to be included in the Secretary-General's policy report to the Preparatory Committee at its second session (see A/AC.257/9). The following entities are presently involved in these inter-secretariat working groups: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, the International Labour Organization, IMF, UNCTAD, UNDP, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization.

19. An extrabudgetary trust fund for the financing for development process was established in May 2000. The Secretary-General, in a note verbale of 2 June 2000, invited Governments to make contributions to this fund, indicating whether such contributions were to ensure effective participation of delegations in the preparatory process and/or to support the other activities for extrabudgetary programmes enumerated in the note. Discussions are also under way with various foundations for possible supplemental financial support for the preparatory process.